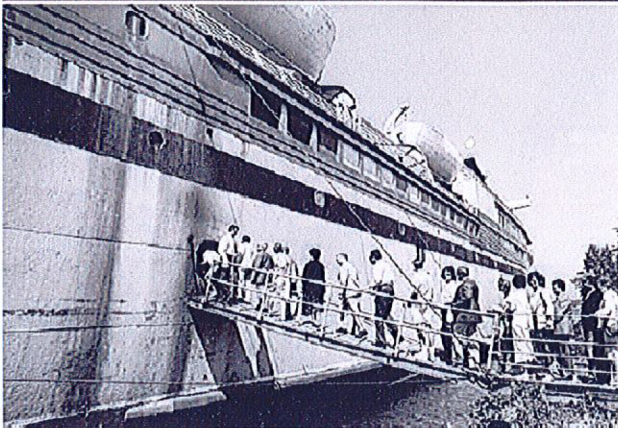


BACK THEN



Cruise tourism to Aruba began in the early 1950's with the visit by the m.s. Libertador, a combination cargo/passenger ship belonging to the Royal Netherlands Steamship Company/K.N.S.M., now known as the Nedlloyd Line.

The first all-passenger ship, the Tradewind, called in Aruba for the first time in 1957. A BBQ with entertainment was organized at the Aruba Palm Beach Club, a private club then located in the now-empty area next to the Westin Resort, to welcome the cruise passengers and also to introduce the first luxury hotel, the Aruba Caribbean Hotel, then under construction, which opened in 1959. It is now the completely renovated Radisson Aruba Caribbean Resort.

It was the Santa Rosa and the Santa Paula of the international steamship company, Grace Line, that began regular Thursday visits to Aruba in 1958 and introduced the island to passengers from the United States. The ships sailed from New York stopping at Curaçao, La Quaira (Venezuela), Aruba, Kingston (Jamaica), Port-of-Prince (Haiti), Fort Everglades (Florida).

The luxurious new Santa Rosa made her first call to Aruba with a full complement of 200 passengers and the crew of 250 and were escorted into the harbor by a large number of motor and sailing vessels. The passengers were offered Aruba

cocktails, a special tropic drink of coconut milk and gin. Touring the ship was possible between 5 pm and 8 pm. and was visited by thousands. The \$25 million dollar ship was 584 feet long measured 20,000 tons with cruising speed of 20 knots. Her sister ship, Santa Paula followed her in late 1958.

Advertisements for the cruise boasted "glass-enclosed promenade decks, orchestra, music and dancing veranda café, swimming pool and social hall." Passengers often debarked in Aruba and stayed for a week or two. The Carib and boarded the next Grace Line ship for the return voyage.

In comparison to today's visitors, those passengers dressed "for the occasion. Gowns and tuxedos were worn for evening activities at the hotel.

For shopping in town men wore long pants and shirts; women skirts, blouses and summer dresses. T-shirts were worn only under a shirt for men; shorts on the tennis court. Flip-flops did not exist. It was an elegant time.

Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of tourists learn about Aruba by arriving on a cruise ship. Touring the island, site-seeing, indulging in water sports induced them to return and stay at the growing number of hotels and participating in time share resorts. Aruba was and still is a foundation for the tourism product and the economy of the island.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1970, a visitor and his family were returning to the U.S. from a vacation in Aruba. As a result of that vacation one of great inventions for travelers was born. Bernard D. Sadow, from Massachusetts, was struggling with two heavy suitcases when he "observed a worker effortlessly rolling a heavy machine on a wheeled skid". According to New York Times travel columnist, Joe Sharkey, Mr. Sadow, who owned a company that made luggage, when he got back to work took the casters off a wardrobe trunk, mounted them on a big travel suitcase, put a strap on the front and pulled it. At age 85, he still holds the patent, Rolling Luggage # 3,653,474. Ah, Aruba